UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.157/PC/76
7 April 1993

Original: ENGLISH

WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Preparatory Committee
Fourth session
Geneva, 19-30 April 1993
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

REPORT ON OTHER MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Note by the Secretary-General

Contribution from the Danish Centre for Human Rights and the Institute of International Education

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/116, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Preparatory Committee on progress made on meetings that had been organized under the auspices of the United Nations programme pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/155.

2. By letter dated 9 October 1992, Mr. Morten Kjaerum, Director of the Danish Center of Human Rights, on behalf of the Danish Center and the Institute of International Education, requested that the report containing the Conclusions to the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, June 1993, adopted by a workshop on the role of voluntary organizations in emerging democracies held in Prague from 21 to 24 June 1992 be included in the discussions of the Preparatory Committee. The Conclusions from this Workshop are annexed to the present document.

GE.93-12689 (E)

The role of voluntary organizations in emerging democracies:

Experience and strategies in Eastern and Central Europe and in South Africa

(Prague, 21 June - 24 June 1992)

Conclusions to the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, June 1993

I Conclusions

1. **Representatives from 25 Eastern and Central European and South African non-governmental organisations met in June 1992 to discuss the role of NGOs in emerging democracies. The participants came up with the following conclusions:**

2. The interconnectedness between the respect for human rights, an open civil society and the existence of a well-established democracy, was implicitly acknowledged by the participants, and there was an unanimous view of the value to the democratic process of an organised civil society.

3. The existence of well-functioning NGOs is certainly in itself evidence of at least minimal respect for such basic human rights as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association. Some NGOs explicitly have among their tasks the defence of human rights issues and are thus important promoters of the respect of human rights standards.

4. In periods of transition to democracy, the need for organisations defending the basic rights of the people, civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights, is urgent. However, limitations of governments, as well as of NGOs, constitute barriers to the creation of the optimal conditions for such organisations to emerge in periods of major political and societal changes.

5. To ensure the continuing progress of democracy, it is a precondition that the establishment of NGOs is not only made possible but indeed facilitated by governments. In order to do this, the meeting agreed that the following steps should be taken:

- **In accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 19 and 20, the right to freedom of expression, freedom af assembly, and freedom of association should be included by the governments in their constitutions.**

- **Governments should promote an environment where lobbying is seen as democratically important, with a clear and constructive purpose for NGOs.**

- **NGOs should have access to participate actively in the constitution-making and law-drafting process when it comes to setting conditions of importance for the legal, political or economical framework of NGOs.**

- **Governments should promote a legislative framework in which NGOs can operate. In the field of tax-regulations, the need for clear and appropriate legislation is particularly urgent.**

- **It should be possible for NGOs to chose between a variety of possible legal forms. There should be no requirement of registration of NGOs, unless this is related to a functional need.**

- **Governments should increase their knowledge of the nature of NGOs, their needs, and how they can be effective counterparts. Conditions for a constructive dialogue between NGOs and the political sector should be established.**

* * * * *

II Introduction

6. The Institute of International Education (New York) and The Danish Center for Human Rights were in June 1992 the coorganisers of the Workshop entitled **The Role of Organisations in Emerging Democracies: Experience and Strategies in Eastern and Central Europe and in South Africa**.

7. The purpose of the workshop was to provide a forum for representatives of 25 NGOs from the two regions to discuss the functions of NGOs in furthering democratic development. Representatives of Western NGOs, such as European Consultation on Refugees and Exiles (United Kingdom), Minority Rights Group (United Kingdom), British Charities Aid Foundation (United Kingdom), Centro Informazione E Educazione (Italy) and Save the Children (Denmark) participated as well, and so did official representatives from the EC and the UN Centre for Human Rights, Geneva.

8. At the Workshop the following issues were specifically discussed: The functions of NGOs in fostering democratic development; similarities and differences in the challenges facing Eastern and Central Europe and South Africa; the legal and policy frameworks required for an open civil society and the internal and external dimensions of institution building.

9. When discussing the development in these regions, in particular in the Eastern and Central European Communities, the focus of interest tends to be the development in the economic and political sphere. At the Workshop the central theme of discussion was the responsibility of NGOs, as well as of the government, in strengthening the civil sphere. The interventions and the debate at the Workshop, as well as the actual events in the regions concerned, show, that in order to consolidate and strengthen positive economic and democratic development, the creation of a strong civil sphere is crucial, in particular in fulfilling an educative task vis-á-vis the public.

The following report presents the main points made at the workshop.

III The functions of NGOs in fostering democratic development

A. Introductory observations

10. Although it was agreed that the differences between South Africa and the Central and Eastern European region are significant, and that the Eastern and Central European countries cannot be considered a monolithic bloc, the meeting concluded that there is a valid basis for comparison between the two regions. The key words 'isolation' and 'totalitarianism' were used to describe the important historical parallels between the represented countries.

11. Realising that the two regions, in spite of their similarities, do differ to a substantial degree, the following hypotheses were offered
- Eastern and Central Europe is trying to get the state out of peoples' lives while South Africa is trying to get the state more responsible in the lives of the people
- Eastern and Central Europe is moving from the command economy to the free market system, while South Africa may be moving toward less reliance on market forces and a more interventionist role of government in the economy.

12. It was suggested that one substantial difference between the two regions consisted in the fact that Eastern and Central Europe is experiencing a **de jure** constitutionally arrived at emerging democracy while in South Africa there is only the hope of constitutionally arriving at an emerging democracy.

13. The interventions and debates made it clear that, in most Eastern and Central European countries, the cooperation between NGOs and the government is closer than in South Africa. This in turn affects the conditions under which the organisations must operate.

14. The meeting found it important to stress that there might be problems in discussing the civil sphere, if the political sphere and the commercial/economic sphere are weak and even disintegrating.

15. The meeting generated an alternative to the rather negative term 'non-governmental organisation', and the rather misleading term 'voluntary organisation', namely 'civil society organisation'.

B. The nature and role of civil society and NGOs

16. NGOs were defined in terms of their democratic role, their nonprofit and nonstate character, and their adherence to a socially useful cause.

17. It was argued that NGOs perform a dual role in a democratic society. They constitute a precondition for, as well as a supplement to, the constitutionally defined political process and the formal bodies of the democratic state.

18. A number of common functions of NGOs were outlined
- articulating the demands of citizens
- encouraging diversity and growth of opinions
- being agents of political mobilisation
- being agents of political socialisation

- providing early warning mechanisms, on a national as well as an international level
- being a buffer against the state and against the market.

19. A number of potential pitfalls to the smooth functioning of NGOs were stressed
- the underrepresentation of NGOs defending the interests of weak, but large, groups such as children
- the domination of a few big and professionalised organisations in the landscape of NGOs
- the cooptation of NGOs into the apparatus of the state or the market economy.

20. It was suggested that an important task for NGOs is to represent the citizens, not only in their relationship to the state, but also to the commercial sector.

21. It was stressed that NGOs face specific challenges in times of transition from authoritarian to democratic rule, mainly
- charting new relations with governments,
- helping formulate new legal frameworks supportive of civil society,
- generating policy options and public information,
- monitoring the transition process itself,
- providing a reservoir of talents from which new ranks of political and government leaders can be drawn as the transition proceeds.

Strong emphasis was put on the need for NGOs to ensure their own internal democratic accountability.

22. It was suggested that the differences in the socio-economic and political context determine the role, the function, the strategy, and the policy of NGOs.

23. Some urged that NGOs avoid getting too closely identified with political groupings. Political organisations compete for political power and are potential governments. NGOs closely tied to political organisations risk losing the independence and credibility required for the effective performance of the essential roles and functions that have been mentioned.

24. The meeting considered the notion that the relation between the civil society and the state need not automatically be either adversarial or cooperative. It was agreed, that NGOs should not assume activities which are the legitimate responsibility of the state. The role of NGOs in setting the framework of democratic debate and the ensuring of the public good was emphasized.

IV Distinctive features for NGOs in emerging democracies

25. The interventions and the debates showed that all states had seen a veritable explosion in the formation of NGOs since the revolutionary changes of recent years.

26. The participants agreed that the very factor of repression itself had been the mobilising force for and key element in the formation of NGOs whose role would need reevaluation given the demise of the ideological underpinning of the struggle. Some questioned whether there could be sufficient human rights and humanitarian engagement with efficiency and consensus to fill the resulting vacuum.

27. Participants described an often uneasy and sceptical relationship between the NGOs and the authorities, press and public opinion. It was argued that this phenomenon could be explained partly by the present overpolitisation of all societal questions, as well as to the lack of understanding of the role of NGOs and the lack of trust toward these organisations.

28. The situation of NGOs in Eastern and Central Europe was characterised as being one in which the vocabulary of voluntarism has not yet been adopted by the people. NGOs are at the present stage looking for a role between the paternalistic values promoted by the communist regimes which were hostile to charity or other voluntary actions, and the spirit of self-centered individualism, laissez faire capitalism equally hostile to giving and to non-profit actions.

29. All participants pointed to an inadequate, evolving and sometimes chaotic legislative framework in which they were supposed to operate. Problems of cooperation and coordination among NGOs themselves and in relation to local and national authorities were highlighted.

30. It was a common theme of the session that virtually all NGOs were in need of 'management' help, be it in administrative techniques, fundraising, marketing, or computer technologies.

31. Many participants reported serious financial limitations and heavy dependence on foreign funding. The tax system, which will be described below, may provide a partly explanation to this.

32. A variety of views were expressed about the advantages and dangers attached to assistance from outside donors. For some it was the sine qua non of their existence; for others it implied a threat of interference by unquestioned Western European values. Contributions from South African participants underlined the unhealthiness of long-term dependence on outsiders.

V The legal and policy frameworks required for an open civil society

A. Freedom of association

33. In the Eastern and Central European countries constitutions or/and laws allow NGOs and guarantee them rights of freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and freedom of expression but other necessary elements are missing such as a specific and clear legal framework and favorable economic conditions.

34. In apartheid South Africa there have been inadequate legal or constitutional guarantees for NGOs, and freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and freedom of expression have been severely curtailed. The laws have created an environment in which it is possible for NGOs to be established legally, but there still is substantial governmental control on their functioning.

35. The participants agreed upon the fact that even though the state of law differs between the countries, the freedom of association is a **de facto** reality.

B. Problems of transition

36. In the Eastern and Central European countries problems of transition include implementation, a lack of clarity of the position of NGOs because of a mixture of old and new laws, and attempts to interpret old laws in modern circumstance. Legislation has sometimes been hastily drafted and passed without appropriate consideration.

37. In South Africa the 'policing' of NGOs, e.g. through control over fundraising has characterised the situation. NGOs thus risk being banned or limited in their area of operation. International links were said to have provided some protection against banning in many cases.

38. It was stressed that the emergence of democracy does create new space for NGOs but does not automatically create the structures that promote dialogue and cooperation between the political and the civil sector. It was agreed that

- the political sector should facilitate and establish conditions for this dialogue to take place,
- NGOs should be invited to participate in the draft-making process of laws and regulation whenever these touch upon issues of relevance for the conditions of the organisations.

C. Fundraising and Taxation

39. There seems to be, as yet, no consistent legal framework in the Eastern and Central European countries for receiving donations or gifts or on fundraising. In some countries the same rules apply to 'foundations', which fund projects, and 'associations', which implement them. There are limited benefits for giving to NGOs, but in some cases there are exemptions and tax deductions for donations. Problems arise when it comes to commercial or profit-making activities, as well as when NGOs supply services for a fee instead of free.

40. NGOs in South Africa have experienced substantial control over the collection and receipt of funds. Taxation policies fully supportive of private and corporate support for NGOs has not yet been enacted.

VI Building institutions

A. Common principles in institution building

41. It was argued that if institutions are to be built on firm foundations, careful thought and planning is essential

- the specific socio-economic and political context in which NGOs are operating should be identified in order to shape the organisations according to the challenges they will meet,
- the organisations should embrace in their own terms such valuable tools from other sectors as strategic planning, bearing in mind that the process of building the institutions should always be democratic in style.

42. It was proposed that the statute of any NGO should lay down the structures in which both the form and the substance of the organisation should be reflected. Two approaches as to how the organisation can be structured were outlined

- the traditional approach, or the top-to-bottom paradigm, premised on the assumption that substantial development can only be initiated by individuals or units in position of power or authority and bring about change on a wide scale.
- the participatory approach, or the bottom-to-top paradigm, based on the assumption that those who would benefit most from the development, the grassroots, are the best people to initiate, determine, and sustain these initial efforts. This approach embodies principles such as self-reliance, social and political maturity, and self-determination.

43. It was also argued that NGOs need to develop a common ethic. NGOs must

- be transparent in their structure and functioning,
- accountable to their members and supporters,
- practice and monitor equal opportunity policies,
- ensure that there is a pluralist approach in their decision-making and programming,
- avoid the marginalisation of other organisations and their issues.

Participation and consultation with the constituency were also stressed as important elements in the institution building as well as in the 'every day life' of the institution.

44. If the civil society is to be involved in a democratic process, it can only flourish in the context of educated and informed citizens, and hence it is a specific responsibility of NGOs to educate and to inform the public. Techniques of strengthening the constituency of an organisation were explored and these include seeking allies within or outside the state, and organisations acting in unity. The need for systematic leadership development efforts was

similarly stressed.

45. Education and training were two recurrent themes in discussing institution building. Needs in training should embrace not only staff, but also volunteers. The range of options suggested includes

- exchanges of staff,
- sharing experience and good practice,
- bringing in experts,
- sharing expertise among organisations.

In the wide-ranging debate it was recognised that the education, training, and development of the governing board should not be forgotten.

46. Other fundamental elements in the institution building process were stressed as well

- consultation,
- the need for better understanding of planning,
- the development of a strong public relations or communication system, and of clear fund-raising policy,
- financial and basic management, marketing, and computerisation.

47. Starting from the position that the relationship between the state and the NGO is a crucial ingredient in a democracy, the following suggestions emerged aimed at furthering the mutual understanding

- improvement of the education of local and central governments as to the nature of organisations, their needs, and how they can be effective counterparts
- governments should promote an environment where lobbying is seen as democratically important, with a clear and constructive purpose for many NGOs, giving voices to the voiceless.

Conversely,

- education of NGOs in the methods of government may also be helpful,
- NGOs should seek to recognise successes as well as failures in state activities, if their critical evaluation is to be credible and honest.

B. Pitfalls in institution building

48. With a few exceptions the participants all agreed that foreign funding may be essential for the NGO's existence, due to the specific socio-economic conditions which prevail in times of transition.

49. Issues relating to dangers in institution building included the danger of dependency, and more specifically that of financial dependency of private as well as governmental funding. The dilemma when engaging in fundraising was said to be that of creating a dependency on external sources.

50. In order to maintain their independence and avoid distortion in the objectives and work of NGOs, it was suggested that they diversify their funding sources. However, it was admitted that the paucity of alternative sources of funds in fragile economies leave few choices for organisations that require guaranteed, long-term funding to build sustainable projects.

51. It was suggested that the key word when facing the abovementioned problems is openness; openness toward the constituency, to the people that the organisation is servicing, as to where the money is coming from, and openness in the relation between donor and recipient, in order to avoid 'hidden agendas'.

52. Participants emphasised the need for NGOs not to move from one fashionable issue to another, but to develop 'staying power' to influence attitudes and environments in order to change the root causes of the particular problems that are being dealt with.

VII Networking

53. It was agreed that 'decentralisation' and 'pluralism' are two important key words in the creation of an open civil society and the building of NGOs. If the organisations are highly decentralised there is obviously a need for communication among them. Similarly, if the advantages of pluralism are to be realised, there has to be some kind of device for sharing the natures and outcomes of these many diverse experiments.

54. It was suggested that networks are vehicles for sharing or gaining access to much-needed technical information about particular fields that an organisation may be engaged in. Networks can also provide the possibility of exploiting available technology which is not readily useful, unless the activity can be linked to a wide community of organisations.

55. Networks may also be a vehicle for assuring a person that his or her work in an NGO is important and for providing solidarity, particularly in periods when the environment may not be entirely hospitable to the work of these organisations.

56. Networking can also help in building consensus among groups that are approaching a common set of demands or issues. The network can in that context play the role of bringing people of common objective closer together in determining what their priorities are and what their underlying approaches should be.

57. Networks can increase the effectiveness of NGOs in bringing their views to bear on a host of processes, e.g. on the framework-setting process, establishing the constitution, as well as the basic laws affecting the civil sector. Similarly, networks are useful in providing advice on a host of policy issues on which the civil society organisations work. They may also serve as vehicles for providing an effective voice in gaining access to funding from local government sources, from bilateral foreign donors, from multilateral donors or foundations.

58. Networks may have the function of alerting people to impending crises. They may also perform a role in helping bring in resources from outside, not only financial resources, that are necessary to respond quickly to the problems of for example human rights violations, drought or famine.

VIII Closing remarks

59. The interconnectedness between the respect for human rights, an open civil society and the existence of a well-established democracy, was implicitly acknowledged by the participants, and there was an unanimous view of the value to the democratic process of an organised civil society.

60. The existence of well-functioning NGOs is certainly in itself evidence of at least minimal respect for such basic human rights as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association. Some NGOs explicitly have among their tasks the defence of other human rights issues and are thus important promoters of the respect for human rights standards.

61. In periods of transition to democracy, the need for organisations defending the basic rights of the people, civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural, is urgent. However, limitations of governments, as well as of NGOs, represent a barrier to the creation of the optimal conditions for such organisations to emerge in periods of major political and societal changes.

62. To ensure the continuing progress of democracy, it is a precondition that the establishment of NGOs is not only made possible but indeed facilitated by governments.

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UNITED
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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.157/PC/77
15 April 1993

Original: ENGLISH

WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Preparatory Committee
Fourth session
Geneva, 19-30 April 1993
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

REPORT ON OTHER MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Note by the Secretary-General

Contribution by the Third International Dialogue on the Transition to Global Society: Transition to a Just Society

1. The General Assembly, by means of resolution 46/116, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Preparatory Committee on progress made on meetings that had been organized under the auspices of the United Nations programme pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/155.

2. By letter dated 31 March 1993, Mr. Wytze Bos, Representative to the United Nations of the Baha'i International Community, transmitted a copy of the report of the Third International Dialogue on the Transition to a Global society, held at the Landegg Academy, Wienacht, Switzerland, from 8 to 11 September 1992. He requested that the report be circulated as a document of the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee. The meeting adopted adopted a multi-disciplinary approach to the theme of the meeting which was "maintaining justice and protecting human rights as fundamental to the management of transition to a global society." Some 80 participants from 20 different countries took part in the discussions.

3. The Conference was co-sponsored by a number of non-governmental organizations, including Human Rights Advocates, the Institute of International Education, the International Council of Women, the International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity and the Baha'i International Community.

GE.93-12724

REPORT ON THE THIRD ANNUAL DIALOGUE ON THE TRANSITION TO GLOBAL SOCIETY: TRANSITION TO A JUST SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

This, the third annual Dialogue on the Transition to a Global Society, was held at the Landegg Academy, Wienacht, Switzerland from September 8-11, 1992. Eighty participants from 20 countries attended. Presenters and responders included Supreme Court and Appellate Court Justices, judges, members of parliaments, statespersons, lawyers, educators, economists, and scientists from across the globe.

Guided by the hypothesis that the emergence of a global society is inevitable in the evolution of human order, these dialogues explore concepts and perspectives which are essential to the process of planning for a peaceful and beneficial transition to a global community. Without such planning, the global society which evolves is unlikely to reflect the highest hopes of its members.

In the atmosphere of these dialogues it is possible to discover and analyze points, both of agreement and contest, to the end that resolution of conflict can take place before the ideas are encountered in hardened structures or irreconcilable doctrines.

The dialogue immediately embraced the concept that the chaos rampant in present society makes it possible for small forces of thought and persuasion to exert a vastly disproportionate influence upon the evolution of human order. Just such gatherings as this can produce a significant change in the unfolding of social progress.

THE MEANING OF JUSTICE

The transition to a just society was seen as the prized essential precursor to the arrival of true global order. The meaning of the term "justice" was found to be elusive. The elements of a just society were more easily determined. These elements were identified and examined in detail. The elements most commonly stressed and recognized as inextricably intertwined with universal human rights were:

1. The rule of law and institutional justice.
2. Freedom of thought, expression and action.
3. Economic justice.
4. Racial justice.
5. Equality of women and men.
6. Environmental and prospective justice.
7. The contribution and detraction of religious practice.

THE RULE OF LAW AND INSTITUTIONAL JUSTICE

No system can maintain justice as a standard without the acceptance of the rule of law as the upholder of that standard. The discussion of this issue centred upon the requirement for constitutional authority upheld by an unfettered parliament, a free press and guaranteed protection of the right of individual participation. Institutions must be the guardians of freedom and the balancers of competing rights. They must be equipped to forestall disputes or to adjudicate them fairly and swiftly using new or innovative alternatives as well as time tested adjudicatory techniques. Sensible non-adversarial approaches to problem solving and dispute resolution should receive great attention by leaders of thought. Children and youth must be trained to settle disputes fairly and in such a manner as will best leave the parties without rancor.

In this discussion, as in every other segment, without fail, education was pronounced to be a critical need. If there is any element without which a just society could not evolve or survive, that element is education.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, EXPRESSION AND ACTION

Although freedom of thought, expression and action were universally accepted as a postulate, there was considerable discussion concerning the limits which might legitimately be placed upon freedom of expression and action. Thoughts varied widely as to appropriateness of censorship and the need to preserve public morals, peace, dignity and the like. In the main it was agreed that freedom of neither expression nor action can be absolute, but the subject of what limits ought to be placed upon the limits to these freedoms is an important item for detailed consultation. Limitation only where necessary to protect against violence or public disorder is the emerging theme from this dialogue.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Justice in the economic sphere was discussed as implying far more than simply the elimination of poverty. Overcoming the incapacitating effect of the extremes of wealth and poverty was, of course, a central theme. But more important to the dialogue than effecting the mere redistribution of the goods and services extant is the concern for the full development of human potential. This development includes the overriding concern for universal education, especially for women, and the need to remove restraints, barriers and prejudices which retard the emergence of the full range of talents and faculties of individuals. Only when every human being, regardless of sex, race or status has his or her full potential made available to the whole civilization can it be said that justice has prevailed. Furthermore, universal systems of protection, delivery and finance must be developed and exploited in order to correct the imbalance created by national and regional insularity and acquisitiveness. New assessments are required of the actual needs of people and a new moral commitment invoked which will eradicate the market for destructive goods and pernicious services.

RACIAL JUSTICE

Any plan for a just society must provide for the elimination of racism. Not only must society come to an understanding of the roots of this baneful evil, but we must evolve the means to promote racial unity and concord, to celebrate contributions born of diversity and recognize the moral imperative of oneness to a just society. Laws must conform absolutely to the principle of equality in all aspects of life. But there also must be a fundamental change in human character which internalizes and fastens this concept forever in every individual conscience. To this end, models of inter-group cooperation and harmony must be applauded and supported. Children must be shown the beauty of diversity and how to welcome different looks, approaches and thoughts. Hundreds of years of hate and discrimination could thus be reversed in a single generation.

Differential education, poverty and political and social expediency which preserve advantage and exclusivity are acknowledged as inimical to a just society. All legal and moral means to eradicate these affronts should be marshaled and utilized.

EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

The entry of women into the policy making forums of the world is held by this dialogue to be vital to a just society. The recognition of the complementary yet equal roles of women and men was discussed as a much needed departure from the present culture in virtually every area of the globe. Despite the attention given to the rights of women by the United Nations and other international agencies, real progress, as opposed to rhetoric, has been scarce. Prompt and consistent attention must be given to the education of girls throughout the world. Poverty must cease to work its heavy and disproportionate limit upon the choices available to women. Men must arise to the eradication of this unjust inequality.

ENVIRONMENT

A society which cripples the future in homage to short term profit cannot deserve to be called just. The rational and economical development of assets which yield the necessities of life is an unquestioned human right of every human being. The means and will must be found to curtail the unnecessary and wasteful pillaging of the environment to serve the self-indulgence of a very small percentage of the total population. Again education is essential to the proper utilization of the earth's resources and the key to preservation and replenishment. Changes are required in the means of production which will protect against environmental pollution and ecological instability. The will to act must be supported by international law and a general moral acceptance.

During the discussion of the environment, a theme was recalled as being a common thread which ran through all discussions. The connecting idea was that of the need for a global authority to make effective the laws, and assure the appropriate conduct, to produce a just society.

RELIGION

Basic human freedoms include the right to believe or not to believe in God. No threat to a just society is seen in the exercise of the right to believe. Where peril is presented to a just society is in the form of the discussions the group had settled upon the notion that no right or freedom in a just society could be absolute. Some limitation upon freedom of religious practice is similarly justified. Continued dialogue along these lines is clearly justified. International law should also concern itself with religious pluralism and anti-social practices.

The value of religion as a source of moral guidance and restraint is acknowledged. In the discussion of every facet of an emerging just society consideration has been given to the necessity for a moral climate necessary to sustain the principles of justice. Absent the general will to behave according to law, there is no hope that the rule of law itself will prevail. Enmity, intolerance and violence cannot be countenanced on any grounds and religion should never be the agent of these evils. In the final analysis, the rule of law cannot depend only upon external enforcement but must be upheld by a common morality. Where this morality is supported by religious practice, the common good is attained. Where it is not, there should be a dialogue concerning the source of common moral values to the end that competing religious expressions should move together to the higher ground of unity.

CONCLUSION

1. The institutions and organizations that constitute society have a primary role to play in safe-guarding and protecting the rights of the population, and therefore deserve to be strengthened. Essential elements in any system that seeks to maintain justice and safeguard and promote human rights include a constitutional authority, capable of enforcing the rule of law, and itself upheld by an unfettered parliament and a free press. Institutions must be equipped to settle disputes or to adjudicate between the parties involved, fairly and swiftly, using new or innovative alternatives in addition to time-honoured techniques. To this end decision-makers and leaders of thought should be encouraged to adopt sound non-adversarial approaches to problem solving and dispute resolution, and to direct attention towards the training of children and youth in these methods.

2. In the transition to a just, global society, due consideration needs to be given to the fostering of a moral climate that will sustain the principles of justice. A just society, upholding the rule of law, can only be maintained when there is the will to enforce and apply moral principles to the governance of human affairs. The recognition of the common source and foundation of moral values, achieved through inter-religious dialogue, will provide a peaceful environment for the application of such principles.

3. Education is an essential element without which a just society, upholding and guaranteeing the rights of all its citizens, could not evolve or survive. It is only through universal education that the sense of belonging to a common human family will be implanted in future generations, thus enabling society to become free of all forms of discrimination. Universal systems should be developed in order to ensure that this kind of education, without exception, is guaranteed to all.

4. The entry of women into the policy-making forums of the world is vital to the emergence and sustenance of such a just society. To this end prompt and consistent attention needs to be given to the education of girls throughout the world, if women are to be able to take up their rightful places in the forefront of society.

UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.157/PC/78
16 April 1993

Original: ENGLISH

WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Preparatory Committee
Fourth session
Geneva, 19-30 April 1993
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

REPORT ON OTHER MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Letter dated 2 April 1993 from the Permanent Representatives of Denmark, Norway and Sweden and the Chargé d'affaires of Finland and Iceland to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights

We, the Heads of the Nordic Permanent Missions in Geneva, have the honour to submit for information a report from the Ninth Nordic Seminar on Human Rights. The Seminar was held by the Nordic Institutes of Human Rights in Lund, Sweden, on 18-20 January 1993, and is a satellite meeting to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights.

The Seminar was devoted entirely to discussion of issues which, in the view of the participants, should be emphasized at the upcoming World Conference on Human Rights. The report records views expressed by members of the Nordic human rights community at that meeting, and is a continuation of the process started at the Eighth Nordic Seminar in Iceland in June 1991 (the report is available in document A/CONF.157/PC/7).

We respectfully request that the enclosed report be issued, for information purposes, as a document of the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee.

GE.93-12730

Report from the Ninth Nordic Seminar on Human Rights, held by the Nordic Institutes of Human Rights at Lund, Sweden, 18-20 January 1993

INTRODUCTION

1. The Ninth Nordic Human Rights Seminar was devoted entirely to the discussion of issues which, in the view of the participants, should be emphasized at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. The report's chapter headings highlight some of the issues:

- human rights system-wide in the United Nations,
- improvement and concolidation of implementation procedures,
- human rights and democracy,
- administration of justice,
- group rights and ethnic conflicts,
- relationship between human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law,
- human rights and development cooperation, and
- the reinforcement of certain standards.

Two issues came up regularly under all of these themes: the status and the rights of women and the role of non-governmental organizations.

3. References are repeatedly made in this report to the equal enjoyment of all human rights by men and women and to the role women should and could play in the human rights field, often with an emphasis on self-help. Women are in a unique position amongst disadvantaged members of society inasmuch as they make up one half of the population and thus, at least as far as democratic countries are concerned, one half of the electorate. The World Conference must address the status and the rights of women in a constructive, substantial and forceful way.

4. The role of non-governmental organizations came up in connection with all of the above-mentioned themes. The World Conference should firmly recognize the contributions and elevate the level of access by non-governmental organizations at all stages within the United Nations system.

I. HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM-WIDE IN THE UNITED NATIONS

5. A large number of institutions within the United Nations system, including all of the principal organs and many of the specialized agencies, are directly or indirectly working in the field human rights. The same is true for the regional organizations. It is important that this work be expanded, coordinated and consistently based on the international human rights standards.

6. Recommendations to the World Conference made under this item included:

- firmly placing human rights as a priority task within the United Nations and in its system-wide operations, in accordance with the overall purposes of the Organization as listed in article 1 of the Charter. The promotion and protection of human rights as a means of fostering and building peace and security within and among states should be recognized;

- encouraging universal ratification or accession to international human rights treaties covering civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Concrete steps should be taken to this end, including issuing lists of non-ratifying states. Further steps could be modelled on the efforts undertaken by the International Committee of the Red Cross with regard to the Geneva Conventions and Protocols;

- carrying out a review of reservations made to human rights treaties with the view of challenging the validity of reservations incompatible with and detrimental to the objectives and purposes of the texts concerned;

- the normative and operational sides of human rights work should be firmly linked. Human rights assessment statements accompanying all development programmes and projects originating within the United Nations system could be one part of such integration, together with subsequent human rights evaluation statements. Bilateral and multilateral development agencies and financial institutions should draw upon the expertise of the human rights programmes of the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation and UNESCO on standards and case law;

- encouraging focused assistance to groups and individuals facing particular problems or discrimination, such as disabled persons, refugee women and children, street children and the girl child, bonded labourers and HIV-infected persons, in order to empower them in the improvement and conduct of their own lifes, including health and working conditions;

- creating a data base which could serve all the human rights actors within the United Nations system. A data base is a necessary and overdue tool for linking the normative and operational work, for increasing the capacity of verification and early warning, for integrating the human rights dimension into development cooperation activities, and for enabling effective networking with non-governmental organizations. The UNHCR Centre for Documentation on Refugees, with an existing and extensive data base including human rights information, could become a joint operation of UNHCR and the Centre for Human Rights. Reference was also made to the proposal from the Eighth Seminar in Iceland about the establishment of a United Nations Human Rights Institute (A/CONF.157/PC/7, para. 81);

- underlining the need for much increased cooperation and coordination between all the actors in human rights work, not least in the fields of implementation procedures and development cooperation;

- requiring a substantial increase or rather a quantum leap in the resources of the Centre for Human Rights, both through the allocation of additional resources from the regular budget of the United Nations and through voluntary contributions, so that the Centre will enjoy the authority and capacity necessary for carrying out its mandated and foreseen assignments. The Centre should be upgraded to a Department within the Secretariat;

- identifying ways and means of strengthening the role and potential of the technical assistance and advisory services programmes of the Centre for Human Rights, including in particular its contribution to bills of rights and legislation, administration of justice projects, and state reports. In these fields, the Centre could often act as a broker between requesting countries and the development agencies;

- authorizing the Centre for Human Rights to place representatives in regional and sub-regional offices of the Organization in order to, inter alia, improve communication between the human rights expert bodies and other organs involved in human rights work. At the same time, the Centre should establish regional bureaus at Geneva in order to develop competence, expertise and cross-fertilization of information which in turn would facilitate its work with regard to technical assistance, advisory services and the reporting obligations;

- making sure that human rights work within the Secretariat, currently managed outside the Centre for Human Rights, such as women's rights, criminal justice and treatment of offenders, should become part of the mainstream human rights debates and operational activities;

- deciding which and what kind of organ should coordinate human rights work within the Organization, take initiatives and provide assistance in the system-wide formulation of strategies for strengthening human rights, participate in and facilitate the participation of human rights organs and experts in peace-keeping and peace-building efforts by the United Nations, and help prevent and investigate human rights violations. The person in charge, whatever the title, that is a High Commissioner, a Special Commissioner or the head of the Centre for Human Rights, should be able to carry out his or her functions promptly, impartially and objectively;

- incorporating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into the United Nations Charter, as a second annex after the Statute of the International Court of Justice;

- elevating the status of the Commission on Human Rights to that equivalent to a principal organ of the United Nations reporting directly to the General Assembly;

7. The World Conference should stress the importance of constructive interaction between international and regional organizations, with regard to both standards and implementation, based on the principle of universality of all human rights. The Conference should also encourage the effective use of regional and sub-regional organizations and their human rights organs for the promotion and protection of human rights.

8. The interrelationship between human rights and ecological rights is clear. Safeguarding and improving the environment will positively affect many human rights, including the rights to life, food and health. Sustainable development, which at the same time enables all human beings a higher quality and security of life, is necessary in order to protect the environment. The World Conference may wish to address these issues, not least the vital roles played by indigenous peoples who are the traditional guardians of safe environmental conduct.

II. IMPROVEMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

9. While recognizing that the primary responsibility for the implementation of all human rights rests with governments and the legislative and judicial authorities at the national level, it was stressed under the various themes addressed in this report that international and regional organizations have a significant role to play in encouraging and monitoring both promotion and protection.

10. Among the suggestions directed to the World Conference were:

- incorporation of human rights texts in national legislation;

- the need to concentrate on hard-core and persistent human rights problems, such as summary executions, torture, disappearances and violence against women;

- the need to assure fact-finding and investigative operations when massive violations of human rights occur in any country or region of the world. The Secretary-General and the Commission on Human Rights, so authorized, should be encouraged to bring these situations to the attention of the Security Council whenever they may endanger international peace and security;

- the need to support special emergency procedures of the Commission on Human Rights in order to address potential conflict situations with prevention in mind;

- the preparation and adoption of an optional protocol to the Covention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, allowing for the right of petition;

- encouragement to women to make more use of existing procedures with regard to equal enjoyment and non-discrimination clauses in existing instruments, such as the complaints procedure under the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

- the preparation and adoption of an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, allowing for the right of petition,

- streamlining of reporting obligations under human rights conventions and appropriate responses to the proliferation of implementation procedures in the United Nations system. Assistance to states in fulfilling reporting obligations, when so requested, should be readily available from the United Nations Centre for Human Rights;

- the establishment of a monitoring mechanism for the rights of disabled persons through the appointment of a Special Rapporteur by the Commission on Social Development, together with a panel of experts with representation from the organizations of disabled persons; and

- follow-up to decisions and recommendations of international and regional human rights monitoring organs.

III. HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

11. It was noted that this may be the first time in history that the majority of all states claims that democracy is their form of government. Seminar participants welcomed the statement that Africa "has chosen the path of democracy", made in the Tunis Declaration adopted by the African Regional Meeting in November 1992.

12. It was also noted that the theme of the report of the Director-General of the International Labour Office to the 79th session of the International Labour Conference, in 1992, was "Democratisation and the ILO". Speakers at the Conference emphasized that certain basic principles had to be respected in any country which claimed to be democratic: the primacy of law, individual and collective freedoms guaranteed by law, the equality of all before the law, recognition of and respect for the diversity of opinions, creeds and cultures, and the full and free participation of all citizens in the political, economic and social life of their country. For democracy to have a real meaning, political freedoms must be accompanied by certain economic and social rights, including many of those laid down in the international labour standards.

13. Democracy is a human right in itself, as was emphasized at the Eighth Nordic Seminar in Iceland, in particular guarantees for the freedoms of speech, association and assembly and the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on race, sex, language or religion. As to the promotion and protection of democracy, issues raised at the Ninth Seminar included the following:

- the recognition that the rule of law and economic, social and cultural rights are co-pillars in a democracy and that a society's democratic nature is endangered if poverty or unemployment reaches unbearable levels;

- incorporation of human rights treaties in national legislation, as has been done in Denmark and Finland, in order to provide standards for judges to enhance the protection at the domestic level;

- the respect for genuinely equal political rights for minorities and indigenous peoples. A decision-making process is truly democratic when all members of society have not only the formal right but also the factual possibility of effective participation;

- the importance of a political and legislative framework in which civil society organizations and other non-governmental organizations can operate freely and effectively;

- more orderly methods for the transition from non-democratic regimes and mechanisms for transfer of power, with emphasis on national reconciliation and the building of pluralistic and democratic societies. The role for and capability of local, regional and international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in observing elections and referenda and engaging in follow-up thereto should be strengthened; and

- the important place of development cooperation in the movement towards democracy and universal respect for human rights.

14. It is a matter of special concern to the Nordic human rights community that, notwithstanding the democracy trends, women's rights and economic and social rights have been marginalized on the human rights agenda. Guarantees for equal political representation of men and women, including affirmative action, and enforcement methods for economic and social rights are essential for democratic developments.

IV. ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

15. Existing international and regional standards on the administration of justice include rules about dissemination of the laws, law enforcement, the prosecution, legal aid services, the independence of the judiciary and of lawyers, the conduct of the trial, the treatment of detainees and prisoners and the facilities in which they are kept, and other national institutions. Seminar participants welcomed the pronouncement that "Administration of justice and the independence of the judiciary are crucial to the full realization of human rights" in the Tunis Declaration of November 1992 and similar elaborations in the Joint Statement on the Administration of Justice and Human Rights by Attorneys-General and Ministers of Justice from Central, Eastern and Southern Africa, made in Nairobi in October 1992.

16. A series of proposals were made with regard to the more effective and more efficient administration of justice:

- absolute guarantees for the right and access to a fair trial, including positive state measures and the necessary budgetary resources. Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights should be added to the non-derogable rights listed in article 4 of the same Covenant, as procedural safeguards are particularly needed in times of national emergencies and crisis situations;

- recognition that the effective administration of justice requires substantial resources. The costs involved must be reflected in national budgets;

- methods of enhancing the independence of the judiciary and of lawyers, coping with threats to judges, and strengthening legal aid services, including human rights education and training for all concerned;

- national and international programmes to combat torture and other cruel and inhuman treatment, including the death penalty and disappearances.

International human rights organs should be able to carry out on-site inspections of the various detention institutions and prisons along the powers allocated to the European Committee against Torture and Other Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

- urgent attention to the human rights of women in the administration of justice, including women-specific standards on female prisoners and abolition of women-specific criminal offenses. The latter would involve offenses concerning pregnancy and adultery which cannot be reconciled with the fundamental right to equality between men and women;

- dissemination of international, regional and national standards to the populace and translation of these texts into all national and local languages. Disabled persons should also receive the human rights instruments in a form/language accessible to them;

- systematic inclusion of multilateral and bilateral projects relating to the administration of justice in programmes of development cooperation, as called for in the Tunis Declaration;

- additional research activities about the administration of justice, including alternative methods of mediation and conflict resolution outside the court room, such as those represented by traditional and local customs, as long as access to judicial review is available;

- strengthening of the procedures and other tools available to international and regional monitoring organs, including follow-up to their decisions and recommendations; and

- networking of and cooperation between all the relevant institutions.

V. GROUP RIGHTS AND ETHNIC CONFLICTS

17. Ethnic conflicts are multiplying in most parts of the world. The dangers to national unity and territorial integrity of states are evident. So are the threats to international peace and security. Participants in the Seminar expressed the view that the enhanced protection of the rights of minorities and of indigenous peoples would help reduce tensions and contribute to the maintenance of peace while at the same time improving the quality of life for the groups concerned.

18. The General Assembly adopted in 1992 a Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The Secretary-General has acknowledged the importance of this Declaration in his 1992 report entitled An Agenda for Peace (document A/47/277 and S/24111). The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has established the post of a High Commissioner for National Minorities. The Council of Europe adopted in 1992 a Charter on Regional and Minority Languages. Case law on minority rights is growing and a number of studies and reports is forthcoming, including the report to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities by Special Rapporteur Asbjorn Eide on constructive national arrangements for minorities.

19. In 1989, the International Labour Organisation adopted Convention No. 169 concerning the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. The United Nations has proclaimed 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Both the United Nations and the Organization of American States are preparing new standards on the rights of indigenous peoples.

20. These responses are encouraging, but insufficient. Proposals for strengthening the protection of minorities and of indigenous peoples, with an emphasis on the

realization of equality by means of non-discrimination and affirmative action and on conflict prevention, included:

- recognition of the relationship between minority rights and the rule of law and democracy, with human rights applied on an universal, objective and non-selective basis;

- emphasis on affirmative action as necessary means of achieving equality, drawing on standards laid down in instruments like the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the new Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities;

- the possibility of preparing international and regional standards providing for autonomy or self-government in local affairs within the countries concerned;

- granting a role to the groups themselves in contributing to state reports under existing treaty obligations and increased access for groups to the policy-making and monitoring bodies, with a possible model in the openness and success of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations;

- the appointment of a thematic Special Rapporteur or working group of the Commission on Human Rights with a minority rights mandate, as proposed by the then Under-Secretary-General Jan Martenson at the 1992 session of the Commission. In addition to the monitoring of existing standards, the mandate should encompass facilitation of dialogue, confidence-building and mediation;

- development of methods for conflict prevention and conflict resolution, possibly by means of advisory services programmes, in which the groups have a say;

- human rights education for both majorities and minorities; and

- respect for minority and indigenous peoples' rights and facilitation of their participation in the planning and execution of development cooperation projects affecting them.

21. The Seminar took note that the World Conference will take place in the middle of the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples. The celebration of the Year must not focus on ceremonial and symbolic aspects, but lead to meaningful changes for the better in the life and status of indigenous peoples. The World Conference should confirm the obligations of the international community in this respect.

VI. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMANITARIAN LAW AND REFUGEE LAW

22. The overall relationship between human rights, refugee law and humanitarian law was emphasized. The drawing of distinct border lines between these subjects is artificial. These issues demand attention because of the many ongoing internal and external refugee flows and the acts of racism and racial discrimination often meeting the victims. Some of these events have resulted in responses by the international community; these responses in turn call for scrutiny and evaluation.

23. Issues for consideration under this heading would include:

- adoption of the Turku Declaration of Minimum Humanitarian Standards which was prepared by an expert meeting in Turku, Finland, in December

1990, or of a similar code of conduct. The text should contain non-derogable standards of both humanitarian law and human rights and be applicable to all situations, during peacetime as well as wartime, particularly in situations of internal violence, disturbances, civil strife, tensions and non-declared public emergencies;

- the role and responsibility of the United Nations in the dissemination and promotion of humanitarian law;

- the responsibility of the United Nations in the implementation of humanitarian law, irrespective of whether the conflict at stake is an international armed conflict, a non-international armed conflict or a situation of internal strife. A reporting system should be established for states to list the measures adopted and Special Rapporteurs should be appointed for specific conflicts. Furthermore, a method of authoritative decision-making about the type of conflict is needed because states tend to minimize conflicts and thus refuse to accept humanitarian law principles. In situations which may be seen as civil war, for example, states argue that they are only fighting terrorist activities;

- encouragement to a broader range of non-governmental organizations to increasingly monitor respect for and breaches of humanitarian law as in the fields of human rights and refugee law;

- the different causes of refugee flows and country-of-origin situations, as well as an effective early warning mechanism and making use of confidence-building measures;

- the role and responsibility of international human rights organs concerning the fate of internally displaced persons, including a monitoring mechanism reporting to the Commission on Human Rights;

- coordination of and cooperation in humanitarian relief activities undertaken by intergovernmental organizations. Human rights standards, refugee law and humanitarian law should provide constant guidance in such activities; and

- the prosecution and trial, either before a national or an international court, of persons responsible for grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including genocidal acts, crimes against humanity and war crimes. IThe International Law Commission should be urged to complete its preparation of a Draft Code of Offences against the Peace and Security of Mankind and the possible establishment of an International Criminal Court should be examined.

VII. HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

24. The term 'development' concerns both developed and developing countries and it is not a static notion. There is no single model for development and institution-building with regard to human rights, and it was underlined that lessons can be drawn from the challenges, obstacles, successes and failures which central policy-makers in all parts of the world have experienced. One of these lessons is that the realization of all human rights, with the individual as the central subject, is crucial to development everywhere.

25. Issues brought up at the Seminar concerning the relationship between human rights and development included:

- the International Bill of Human Rights constitutes a basis, together with other human rights instruments, for creating the conditions necessary for sustainable development.

- the free, meaningful and broadly based participation of all segments of the population in the political, economic, social and cultural development of society, on a democratic and non-discriminatory basis. Equal participation by women should be highlighted;

- the rule of law, good governance, transparency in policy- and decision-making and the establishment of national institutions conducive to the realization of human rights, including that of the ombudsman;

- an appeal to governments, multilateral development agencies and financial institutions to considerably increase the resources devoted to building well-functioning legal systems able to protect human rights and to national instutions working in this area. Bilateral and multilateral actors should make the realization of human rights provided for in the international and regional instruments an integral part of their programmes. Cooperation between all the parties should be based on dialogue and transparency and it should take fully into account the comparative advantages of bilateral and multilateral assistance;

- the establishment of comprehensive programmes, including resource banks of information and personnel with expertise relating to the srengthening of the rule of law and of democratic institutions; and

- encouragement to governments and intergovernmental organizations to delegate more extensive functions to non-governmental organizations as executive agencies for human rights projects, as designers for and planners of various projects, and as protectors for human rights considerations in other projects.

VIII. THE REINFORCEMENT OF CERTAIN STANDARDS

26. Seminar participants emphasized implementation and operational activities relating to existing standards rather than the continuation of standard-setting activities. At the same time, it was recognized that some issues deserve additional or strengthened standards. These include the rights of indigenous peoples, human rights defenders and disabled persons.

27. Several draft texts with proposed standards were presented to the Seminar. They are not annexed to this report as all of them have been or are being made available to the relevant international organizations through other channels. They concern the following issues:

- the Poznan Declaration on Academic Freedom, adopted by an expert meeting held at the Human Rights Centre in Poznan, Poland, in January 1993;

- a draft resolution concerning the dissemination of human rights instruments, prepared at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Sweden, and based on parallel provisions in humanitarian law instruments; and

- a proposal for revising the Principles of Medical Ethics relevant to the Role of Health Personnel, Particularly Physicians, in the Protection of Prisoners and Detainees against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 37/194 on 18 December 1982. The proposal was tabled by the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark in cooperation with the Danish Center of Human Rights and with non-governmental organizations.

IX. ABOUT THE SEMINAR

28. The Ninth Nordic Seminar on Human Rights in Lund was launched in order to contribute to the preparations for the World Conference and thus continue a process started at the Eighth Seminar in Iceland in June 1991 (the report of that Seminar is available in document A/CONF.157/PC/7).

29. About 70 participants from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden attended the Ninth Seminar. The participants who acted in their individual capacities were drawn from ministries and other governmental organs, non-governmental organizations, the legal profession, the academic community and the human rights institutes in the Nordic region. The United Nations Centre for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Austrian Government were represented by observers.

30. Ms. Boel Flodgren, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lund, Mr. Jan Martenson, the former Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights and initiator of the World Conference, Mr. Jakob Th. Moller as the representative of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, and Mr. Goran Melander, Director of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, delivered the opening addresses.

31. Goran Melander served as Chairman and Gudmundur Alfredsson as Rapporteur of the Seminar. Lauri Hannikainen, Haakon Hjelde, Morten Kjaerum, Anita Klum, Ragne Birte Lund, Ann Marie Pennegard and Martin Scheinin were chairmen and rapporteurs of working groups.